



Issue 55

The CP Connection

The Community Partner Newsletter

March 2020

Community Partners:

This has been a trying few weeks for all of us as we respond to the Coronavirus outbreak and adjust to the new realities of life during a pandemic. It also has been inspiring to see everyone come together to keep our community safe and healthy. We know many of you are working around the clock to treat patients, protect your staff and educate the public about COVID-19.

My Health LA is committed to helping MHLA participants and CPs during this time. We have shared several updates by e-mail but wanted to highlight a few of them:

- CPs will get paid early for the January month of service. Instead of waiting for the entire payment later in April, you should be getting it this week (if you haven't already). CPs will also get paid early for the February month of service.
- Participants due to renew in March, April or May will be automatically extended until the end of June. They will need to renew by June 30.
- Enrollments, re-enrollments and renewals also can temporarily be done over the phone. DHS issued a 30-day temporary waiver and a provider bulletin that explains the details.*
- MHLA-specific FAQs and COVID-19 information (in English and Spanish).*
- Telephone and telehealth visits are strongly encouraged but do not count for payment under the "24-month rule".
- L.A. County testing is being prioritized per the county's guidelines.
- My Health LA has moved to a telework model. We are all reachable by phone and e-mail. Remember, if you are closing panels or sites, please let us know.
- Please advise providers not to send patients to DHS urgent care or emergency room for mild symptoms.

Thank you so much for all you are doing and reach out anytime.

—Anna Gorman, Director of Community Partnerships & Programs

* **Note:** These resources will be posted on the MHLA website @ <http://dhs.lacounty.gov/mhla>.



BE COUNTED ✓

We encourage our Community Partners to get the word out — **Respond to the US Census!**

For more information go to: <https://census.lacounty.gov/census/>

Featured in This Issue:

- ◇ **Respond to the US Census**
- ◇ **Staff Changes at MHLA**
- ◇ **MHLA COVID-19 Updates**
- ◇ **SME Line Remains Open**

Staff Changes at MHLA

Ray Plaza, Program Advocate

My Health LA is saying goodbye to three incredible team members who have been with MHLA from the beginning – Cinderella Barrios-Cernik, Mayra Palacios and Jorge Lopez.

Cinderella Barrios-Cernik, Program Advocate, is retiring from the County after 42 years of tremendous dedication to public service. She helped lead MHLA efforts to expand pharmacy, substance use disorder and behavioral health services. She said her most challenging project was seeing from start to finish the pharmacy benefit rollout, which allowed MHLA participants access to medication throughout L.A. County. Enjoy your retirement!



Mayra Palacios, Program Manager, Contract and Audit Administration, is taking on a new challenge working in DHS Diagnostics Services. She has been an integral team member for more than a decade, overseeing contract operations since the Public Private Partnership. She recently onboarded five new agencies, revamped the audits and rolled out the new contract. We will miss her strong leadership.



Jorge Lopez, Program Advocate, has worked tirelessly to develop and improve data analysis and reporting for MHLA and the CPs. He also led the implementation of the 24-month rule and has overseen the program's many reports. Jorge received a well-deserved promotion leading a team of data analysts for DHS. Good luck Jorge!



We will announce new roles soon but in the meantime, please join us in wishing all three the very best in their new ventures!

Additional DHS COVID-19 Updates

Anna Gorman, Director

DHS Website: DHS has a COVID-19 website that has some key information for patients and others. Please find it here – <http://dhs.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dhs/COVID19>

LA County DPH: The Department of Public Health has the most updated information about coronavirus. Please check the site regularly for the latest news. <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>

Specialty Care: DHS is prioritizing essential specialty care visits. Providers can still submit eConsults, but non-time sensitive visits will not be scheduled right away. DHS labs and radiology scheduled will be rescheduled when possible.

Testing: LA County is only testing the highest risk patients with symptoms, such as older adults with chronic medical conditions and those with weakened immune systems.

SME Line Remains Open

Tom Lau, Eligibility Review Unit

The SME Line is still open during regular hours (8 AM to 5 PM) to answer all enrollment questions and to help with new phone enrollment process. In addition, authorizations of new PID requests are still being conducted during regular hours. However, don't be surprised to hear a dog barking in the background if you call in. The expert answering your enrollment question is most likely working from home.

A recent national survey found that 88% of organizations encouraged or required employees to work from home, regardless of whether they showed any symptoms. My Health LA employees are taking part in the mission of fighting the coronavirus outbreak by limiting workplace interaction while still providing full service to our Community Partners.



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Article suggestion? Please contact Ray Plaza at raplaza@dhs.lacounty.gov.

